



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Press Office
(202) 226-9600

Committee Approves Bipartisan Border Security Bill

Washington, D.C. (Thursday, Nov. 17, 2005)— Today, the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security unanimously approved H.R. 4312, the Border Security and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2005. The bill, which takes steps protect America's borders and prevent terrorists from entering the United States, was introduced by Committee Chairman Peter T. King (R-NY).

“The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11th made it clear that our nation must be more aggressive in preventing terrorists from entering the United States,” King said. “We must establish operational control of our borders and swiftly remove illegal aliens once apprehended. The time to act is now- and the passage of this bipartisan bill will bring America one important step closer to ensuring our borders are protected.”

King explained that the primary provisions of the Border Security and Terrorism Prevention Act include:

Establishing Operational Control of All Borders and Ports:

- Requires the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to develop a joint strategic plan that will provide the Border Patrol agents with military support to increase surveillance along the border;
- Mandates DHS to conduct comprehensive risk assessments of all ports of entry and international land and maritime borders to prevent the entry of terrorists and weapons;
- Authorizes 1,000 new, full-time port of entry inspectors over the next four years and the training of 1,500 additional K-9 units over the next five years;
- Reauthorizes the addition of 8,000 new border agents and 32,000 new detention beds over the next four years, in accordance with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004; and
- Establishes physical barriers and incorporates widespread, state-of-the-art surveillance technology, including cameras, sensors, radar, satellite, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), in order to ensure 100% coverage of our borders.

Elimination of the “Catch and Release” Practice:

- Requires mandatory detention for all aliens apprehended at U.S. land borders attempting to cross illegally, by Oct. 1, 2006, and expedited removal of all illegal

aliens who are apprehended within 14 days of entry and 100 miles of a U.S. land border

- Prior to that deadline, aliens who are released pending an immigration removal hearing must post bond of at least \$5,000; and
- Requires DHS to use every available detention bed and find new detention space, such as contracting with state and local jails.

Effectively Organizing the Border Security Agencies Within DHS:

- Requires the Secretary take immediate action to address the inefficiencies and poor communication between the two main border security agencies within DHS, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP); and
- Places Air and Marine Operations (AMO) directly under the authority of the Secretary, eliminating current bureaucracy and allowing for a more flexible, coordinated air program capable of providing tracking, deterrence, rapid response, and investigative support to multiple DHS agencies.

Promoting International Policies to Deter Illegal Immigration:

- Requires DHS to report to Congress on the progress of cross-border security agreements signed between Mexico and Canada and the United States, including the Smart Border Accord and the Security Partnership for Prosperity;
- Authorizes the refusal of visas to foreign nationals from countries that deny or delay the repatriation of their own citizens; and
- Protects valid claims of asylum by requiring a review of the current Border Patrol training protocol, and taking necessary measures to ensure consistency.

“I was happy to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this bill unanimously,” King said. “And I look forward to continuous bipartisan support of this important measure in the full House, so we can enact this comprehensive bill that will better protect our homeland and keep our citizens safe.”

Text of H.R. 4312 and comprehensive background information are available at <http://homeland.house.gov>.

###